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ABSTRACT

The final report of the 3-year Valley Transitional School Project, serving Augusta, Staunton, and Waynesboro schools, all located in Augusta County, Virginia, contains information on the project accomplishments, population characteristics, evaluation activities, dissemination activities, replication, products developed, and conclusions and recommendations. The purpose of the project was to develop and validate a model which would assist school youth with severe disabilities to make the transition from school to employment, in the most competitive employment environment possible. Stressed were the following key elements: curriculum emphasis during the elementary years; systematic vocational training throughout the secondary years; effective work by cooperative interagency teams; parent, consumer, and employment involvement; and community and professional awareness and support of multiple employment options. Specific project accomplishments are listed for each of eight objectives including: developing and implementing a multi-agency comprehensive assessment model; providing a work experience for students to aid in the transition to employment; developing a community based curriculum; organizing a parent employer advisory group; developing an inservice training module for school personnel and developing an awareness module for parents and employers. (DB)

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VALLEY TRANSITIONAL SCHOOL PROJECT

FINAL REPORT
(October 1, 1984 - September 30, 1987)

Grant Funded By U.S. Dept. of Education
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Route 1, Box 255, Fishersville, VA 22939
703/332-7700

EC 211 814

September 1987

GRANT PARTICIPANTS

CO-SPONSORS

Augusta County Public Schools	Mr. Edward Clymore, Superintendent
Staunton City Public Schools	Mr. Kenneth Frank, Superintendent
Waynesboro City Public Schools	Dr. Thomas Varner, Superintendent
Va. Department of Rehabilitative Services	Mr. Altamont Dickerson, Commissioner
Vector Industries - Grant Contractor	Mr. Errol Gann, General Manager
(Formerly Valley Workshops, Inc.)	Ms. Bonnie Jones, Director (2/85-12/86)

PROJECT STAFF

Project Director	George Drummond
Assessment Coordinator	Barbara Lambert-Smallwood
Job Site Coordinator	Tracey Straub
Job Site Coordinator	Susan Shreckhise
	Beth Woodrum (1984-1986)
Liaison Rehabilitation Counselor	Mary Jo Hawkins
Liaison Rehabilitation Counselor	Connie Caldwell
Technical Assistance Provided by:	Tom Bass, Paul Bassett & Grant Revell
	D.R.S. Central Office

PROFESSIONAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Augusta County Schools	David Shriver
	Karen Santos
	Ann Stearns
	William Vaughan
	Jake Baker
Staunton City Schools	Leah Pack
Waynesboro City Schools	Maggie Christensen-VanHuss
Dept. of Rehabilitative Services	Tom Bass
	George Drummond
	Mary Jo Hawkins
	Connie Caldwell
Grant Staff	Barbara Lambert-Smallwood
	Tracey Straub
	Susan Shreckhise

PARENT/EMPLOYER ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Carol Gibson	Parent
Hallie Cash	Parent
Willis Miller	Employer
Jerry Layman	Employer
Susan Shreckhise	Valley Transitional School Project
Barbara Lambert-Smallwood	Valley Transitional School Project
Tracey Straub	Valley Transitional School Project

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We hope our efforts will contribute in a positive way, to the national effort concerning the transitioning of youth with disabilities from school to adult life.

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I. Project Overview

A. The original purpose of Valley Transitional School Project was to develop and validate a model which would assist school youth, with severe disabilities, to make the transition from school to employment, in the most competitive employment environment possible.

Five key elements of transition addressed through this grant included:

- Curriculum emphasis during the elementary years.
- Systematic vocational training throughout the middle and secondary years;
- Effective work by cooperative interagency teams;
- Parent, consumer and employer involvement throughout the transitional planning process; and
- Community and professional awareness and support of multiple employment options.

B. Accomplishments

The original project design (See Figure I) was intended to provide a continium of vocational and educational programs including a comprehensive vocational assessment, vocational guidance and counseling; work adjustment services; vocational exploration and training; job placement and job retention services and indepencent living skills development. Also, it was our intent to assist with the restructuring of the existing education/rehabilitation/adult services delivery system to allow students better access to adult services within the community.

Various vocational and educational components of this design were already in existence prior to project initiation, as is the case in many communities throughout the country. However, the problem centered primarily around the need for better case management and coordination of a more formalized transitional services system.

Three major components of the design included assessment, training and placement.

The original intent was to begin in a preparatory phase during the graduation minus three (3) school year and proceed through graduation into the post-secondary phase (See Figure 2). The model also featured a "recycling" element, in that any student could utilize any combination of assessment, training and placement options as often as it was deemed necessary.

FIGURE I

DRS/Augusta County Schools, Staunton Schools and Waynesboro Schools

Cooperative Project/Transition from School to Work

Project Design

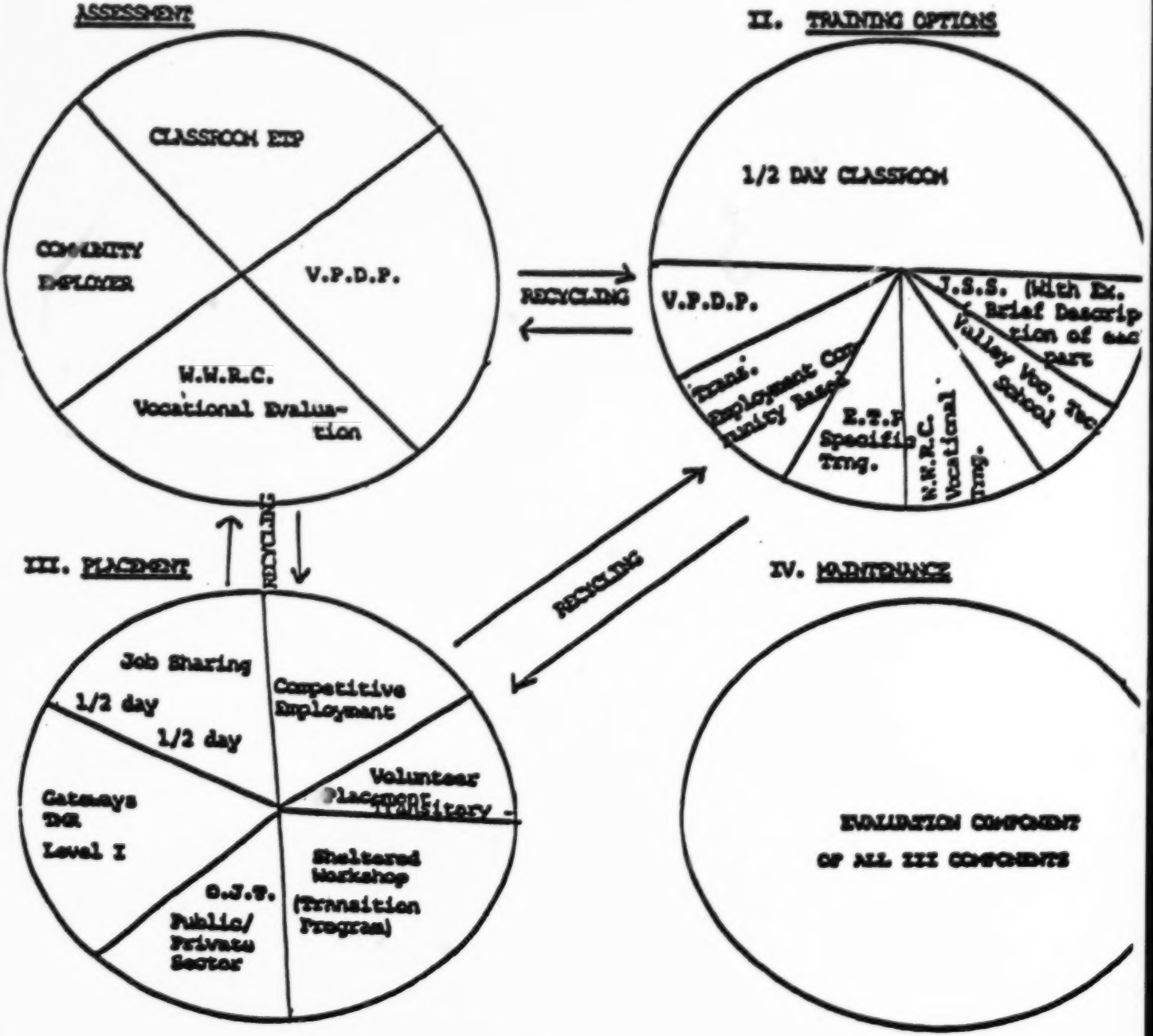

EXHIBIT II

VALLEY TRANSITIONAL SCHOOL MODEL

LONGITUDINAL PROCESS

Preparation Phase Graduation Minus 3 (10th Grade)	Assessment Phase Graduation Minus 2 (11th Grade)	Training Phase Graduation Minus 1 (12th Grade)	Post Secondary Phase Post-Secondary Options/Employment
Potential Referrals for Project: Schools & DRS will jointly identify names of potential candidates. Both current as well as potential referrals (Fall) **Referrals Screened:** PAC plus project staff will select most appropriate candidates. (Fall-Winter) **Student/Parent Contact:** Letters will be sent by each school system to students & their parents notifying them of the purpose of the project. Obtain permission and committment for participation. (Spring) **I.E.P. Consultation/ Planning:** I.E.P. meetings will be scheduled by schools to include Parents/Student, School Special personnel, DRS, ETP staff, Project staff, Assessment Specialist. A tentative I.A.P. (Individual Asses Plan) will be formulated as an supplement plan to I.E.P. which will begin Fall of following school year and a Release of Information obtained from parents to release pertinent data to DRS/Project Staff during IEP conference. (Early Spring) **Referral to DRS Counselor/ Project Staff:** Once Student/Parent committment has been obtained, schools will make a joint referral to DRS Counselor and Project staff. Referral information will include pertinent diagnostic material such as medical exams, testing data, etc. DRS/Project Staff will meet with Student/Parents to formalize and complete necessary paperwork & make arrangements for Fall Assessment Phase. (Spring/Summer).	**Assessment Plan Implemented:** Assessment Phase will run throughout the year. Beginning in the fall the Students Plan will be implemented to include an academic/vocational assessment in one or more of the following situations. Classroom, ETP, VPDP (Community Work Adjustment), WARD-Vocational Evaluation, Work Site Assessment. Coordination of plan will be the primary responsibility of Project Staff in cooperation with schools/DRS. (Fall) **Follow-Up Consultation:** Project Staff/DRS Counselor will gather assessment findings & review informally with parents/student. A team staffing will be arranged including Project Staff, Schools, DRS, ETP, to formally review findings & lay groundwork for I.E.P. (Winter/Spring) **Development of I.E.P./ I.W.R.P.:** I.E.P. meeting will be arranged by schools to include team members at which time I.E.P./I.W.R.P. is developed with a vocational training emphasis for the following year. Outcomes will be directed either into the training phase or extension of the assessment phase. (Late Winter/Early Spring).	**Training Options Implemented:** Based on IEP/IWRP student will begin training program. Majority of students will attend classroom 4day & 4 day in a specific training activity (i.e. OJT, ETP, WARC, VPDP (work adjustment); Unpaid Work Experience (DRS), etc. (Fall) **Intervention Strategies/ Coordination:** Project Job Site Coordinator will work closely with student, parents, employers, schools & Rehab to identify any problem areas and assist with the implementation of appropriate intervention techniques. (On going) **Review/Consultation:** Project Staff will serve primary Coordinator Role for periodic reviews, progress reports, & needed project conferences, etc. (On-going) **I.E.P. Staffing:** All concerned parties to meet & discuss progress and make recommendations regarding the students graduation. If graduating, no additional IEP needed. If student will not graduate and is under age 22, than IEP is formulated for next year and will re-enter the Assessment and/or Training Phase. (Late Winter/Early Spring). **Follow-Up Process:** Project staff will continue to provide all parties (schools, DRS, etc) with pertinent follow-up data on those students graduating & involved in post-secondary employment activities.	Competitive Employment or Job Sharing or O.J.T. or Unpaid Work Experience or Volunteer Job Placement or Sheltered Workshop or Gateway Enterprises, Inc. or Full Time Vocational Training at W.W.R.C. or other training vendor. or Additional Pre-Vocational Services as needed (Counseling, Vocational & Personal Development Training, etc.) (Project will work with students through age 22. DRS will continue to work with students regardless of age until case closure is deemed appropriate).

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The design stayed intact throughout the grant period without any significant deviations. Various sections were utilized more frequently than others however, and this will be discussed in greater detail during the review of the projects eight (8) grant objectives described below:

Primary Objective #1

1. To develop and implement a multi-agency comprehensive assessment model to provide students with early preparation to work.

Prior to the initiation of the grant, vocational assessment of students preparing to exit schools primarily centered around DRS providing vocational evaluations through a local comprehensive rehabilitation facility. Through this project, we were better able to accomplish the above objective. Project staff were able to assume the lead role in providing case management services and the coordination of a comprehensive assessment plan. Some of what was accomplished was simply the identification and improved utilization of services already available through existing community agencies and local schools. However significant progress was made in other key areas which will be addressed a little later. The assessment model was divided into four (4) basic components - Classroom; Vocational & Personal Development Program (DRS operated community based work adjustment facility); Woodrow Wilson Rehabilitation Center for Vocational Evaluations; and the community/employer sector.

Specific accomplishment include:

1. An improved planning and communication system between academic and vocational teachers within the school system, coupled with more effective student information provided to DRS and other adult service providers.

2. For the first time, project staff were able to obtain more pertinent data (on a more consistent basis) regarding the students performance in the classroom. This added significantly to the development of the Individual Transitional Plan (ITP), the Individual Educational Plan (IEP), and DRS's Individual Written Rehabilitation Plan (IWRP). In addition to obtaining information from the classroom teacher, the project Assessment Specialist was able to participate in classroom observations, class field trips, and free time activities (i.e. lunch, etc.)

3. With the TMR group, students moved outside of their classrooms and participated in assessment within several areas of the school facility (i.e. grounds, maintenance)

4. Much progress was made to improve the quality of the information received from evaluations provided by the local comprehensive Rehab facility. In addition to students receiving an orientation (not previously provided) before they began their vocational evaluations, teachers were asked for input as to which vocational areas students might try. Two EMR academic teachers took responsibility for accompanying student for the vocational evaluations. If students finished the evaluation process early on any given day, they were then referred to the academic teachers who provided academic instruction and leisure skills activities before returning with the entire group to the home school. (This process solved various logistical problems for the schools and Rehab facilities alike.)

5. A very significant piece of our comprehensive assessment plan included community/employer assessment. While this service was available throughout the school year, a majority of these assessments took place during the summer months. One special project included a close working relationship with a JTPA Sponsored Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP). During the summer of 1986, for example, twenty-four (24) students were employed through SYEP. Project staff requested that each employer complete an evaluation form on students twice during the summer. Employers were given a list of behaviors, to be rated on a scale from "not a problem" to "possible reason for dismissal". Results were compiled and then shared with classroom teachers and others involved with the students transitional plan (Figure 3).

Various community programs were also utilized, adding to the comprehensive nature of the projects assessment model. Some of the major programs used included a sheltered workshop; Community Mental Health/ Mental Retardation Work Program; JTPA programs existing in our locality and DRS' community work adjustment - two week situational assessment services.

6. Senior EMR students were also provided additional work related experiences for a six week period through the local school programs operated by the Vocational/ Technical Center.

(Figure 3)

SYEP EVALUATIONS

This is an overview of the supervisors' evaluatons for 24 VTSP clients that worked in the Summer Youth Employment Program. By the end of the eight weeks five of 24 had quit, one finding another job and four for behaviors. Evaluations were sent out twice to SYEP supervisors: the first after two weeks, the other after one month. The following were listed in order of ranking for <u>needing improvement or possible reason for dismissal</u>.

	# of times sited by supervisors
1. not staying on task without reminder	6
2. not being careful and neat in work habits	5
3. not being a good time manager(i.e. works too fast or slow, takes breaks inappropriately)	4
4. not getting along with coworkers	4
5. not being on time for work	3
6. not asking for more when finished with the task	3
7. not being neat in appearance	2
8. not getting along with the supervisor	2
* 9. not responding well to correction	1
* 10. showing anger or frustration on the job	1
* 11. not showing frustration appropriately	1

NOT SEEN AS PROBLEMS WITH SUPERVISORS

1. workers called in when sick from work	0
2. workers followed rules and regulations	0
3. attendance	0

Additional comments included : lack of self-confidence and bad attitude.

* These three possible reasons for dismissal were for one ED student.

In summary, the project was instrumental in helping to bring about improved communications between school/ DRS/ and Adult Services personnel; provided for greater assessment options for students, (both from the school as well as community standpoint), brought the classroom teacher into the Vocational/Transitional picture for each student; and in general provided comprehensive assessment data that before was only partially obtained.

Specifics relating to the number of students being assessed and the various sites/options used is detailed in Table 1 below:

Table 1

VALLEY TRANSTIONAL SCHOOL PROJECT

Assessment Data
October 1984 - September 1987

Number of Students Served*

	FY 85	FY 86	FY 87	TOTAL
Woodrow Wilson Rehabilitation Center (Vocational Evaluation)	7	26	13	46
Vocational & Personal Development Program. (Situational Assessment)	10	12	7	29
Vector Industries (Sheltered Facility)	1	1	4	6
MH/MR Gateway Enterprises.	2	3	1	6
Community Employer (On-Job Assessment)	15	31	20	66
Classroom.	56	16	16	88
				243

We originally Projected to serve a total of 70 students during the 3 year period, 1984-1987. However, the Project actually worked with 119 students.

Primary Objective #2

2. To provide a unique work experience for students who are ending their formal secondary education which will provide transition to successful employment.

Initially it was felt that students would benefit from additional in-school training options. Our design included one-half day of academics in the classroom and one-half day involvement in a variety of training options including: the community based work adjustment; one-half day training at the local Rehab Center (WWRC); OJT, either through the schools work program or DRS; and the local vocational/technical school.

However, it was learned that while various training options were occassionally utilized, the majority of students continued to participate in the school operated program of one-half day academics and one half day in an alternative vocational program, geared mostly to TMR/EMR and disadvantged youth (Employment Training Program - ETP). This was due in part to a time factor which basically allowed approximately two (2) hours to be spent on afternoon training programs.

The accompaning table illustrates the various training options utilized and their frequency.

Table 2

TRAINING OPTIONS UTILIZED

(Spring 1985* - September 1987)

	FY 85	FY 86	FY 87	TOTAL
Employment Training Programs (Schools) . . .	54	16	16	86
Woodrow Wilson Rehabilitation Center (DRS) .	2	7	1	10
Unpaid Work Experience (DRS)	2	2	6	10
Community Based Work Adjustment (DRS). . . .	5	8	5	18
On-the-Job Training (JTPA/DRS)	5	2	5	12
Gateway Enterprises (MR Services Board). . . .	2	3	1	6
Center for Independent Living (DRS).	1	1	1	3
Vector Industries	0	0	0	0
Job Shop (JTPA).	0	2	0	2
Valley Vocational Technical Center (Schools) .	0	2	1	3
Other.				6
				156

*Project did not start working with students until Spring 1985.

Due to the time constraints mentioned earlier, most out-of-school training options were used after the students completed their final school program. As illustrated earlier, the design of the project allowed and encouraged the use of several training options for each student. Therefore the 156 total shown above reflects students who participated in more than one training option.

The breakdown of training usage shows that 60% of the options used were in school and 40% involved participation in community based options.

Specific accomplishments included:

1. Various training options were made available as stated in the above objective, even though some of the options were not utilized as frequently as we had anticipated.

2. The job coaching concept allowed for job coaches to accompany severely disabled students on work and training sites in the community that otherwise would most likely not have had the opportunity to take advantage of the resources. Specifically job coaches were used in the community based work adjustment program (VPDP), in sheltered employment settings as well as competitive placements, particularly for the TMR level student.

3. Information gained from the training experiences over the past three (3) years contributed significantly to the development of the community based curriculums being revised and developed by local school personnel.

4. By having additional case managers/job coaches, we were able to illustrate that severely disabled school students can be integrated into community programs with only a minimal amount of staff and almost no additional resources or materials required.

5. Demonstrated that the in-school training programs geared to the lower skill areas (i.e. janitorial, food service, etc.) were very adequate in providing entry level training to severely disabled students since most of those placed required only a minimal amount of OJT or job coaching to successfully perform at these jobs.

Primary Objective #3

3. To develop a community based curriculum for students preparing to enter the labor market.

During the time when the grant objectives were being developed, the three (3) local school sytems expressed the need for a community based curriculum for students who were TMR and EMR. Although this grant was geared to working with students, three years prior to their graduation, the schools and DRS realized that work values as well as the entire transitional process needed to begin as soon as the students entered school Therefore, it was decided to pursue this objective during the three year grant period.

The Valley Transitional School Project staff assisted school personnel by exploring curriculums that already existed. The results of this search revealed that there did not appear to be much current information available on this topic, at least within the State of Virginia. In fact, we learned that a state task force, under the direction of Virginia's Department of Education - Special Education Division, was being formed to address this issue.

Rather than wait for new curriculum material to be developed and sent, the localities decided to take advantage of the opportunities presented by the project and proceeded to work on developing their own curriculum. Work first began to focus on the TMR curriculum since the local TMR class was a regional program. The Augusta County Special Education Supervisor spearheaded this project and provided the lead role in coordinating this effort. The curriculum has been completed (attached under separate cover) and addresses the needs of students from kindergarten through grade 12. (Many of these needs were identified and confirmed through various surveys and through information supplied to the schools over a three year period, by project and DRS staff on students enrolled in our transtional school project.)

During the third year of the grant, the school systems of Augusta, Staunton, and Waynesboro joined together to develop and complete a similar community based curriculum (K-12) for the EMR academic program (see attachment under separate cover). As the grant was ending in September 1987, plans were being made to revise and update the EMR vocationally oriented curriculum.

Specific accomplishments include:

1. Assisted the three school systems with the development and revision of community based curriculum for the TMR level student to include both academic and vocational components of the curriculum (See separate enclosure).

2. Assisted the three school systems with the development and revision of the community based curriculum (academic component) for the EMR student. (See separate enclosure).

Primary Objective #4

4. To organize a Parent/Employer Advisory Group to assist with project issues relative to parent/employer transitional concerns.

Initially we arranged with the Augusta County Special Education Advisory Committee to develop a sub-committee which would form the nucleus of our projects. Parent/Employer Advisory Council (P.E.A.C.) Project Staff felt that by adding several employers to an already existing group would be a more effective approach than creating another new group. It was necessary however to reorganize the PEAC to allow for a smaller and more efficient group.

In addition to regular Parent Advisory Committees (i.e. LEA's) existing in the local communities, there were several other projects in operation during the time the project began. This seemed to add to the confusion which was expressed by various parents and employers asked to serve on our PEAC.

However, with reorganization, the project and the PEAC were able to identify some significant objectives to be accomplished during the three year period. Specific accomplishments included:

1. With the tremendous support of our local I.E. Demours Dupont plant (Waynesboro location), and volunteer assistance provided by local DRS staff, project staff developed a video entitled: A Sense of Pride. (Enclosed under separate cover).

This video spearheaded by the PEAC and project staff attempts to deal with some of the major concerns expressed by both parents and employers alike (i.e. effects of employment on SSI, insurance risks, addressing various 'mind sets' concerning the type of jobs

students with severe disabilities can perform, etc.)

2. Two (2) Public Relations pamphlets were also developed and completed, titled A Sense of Pride-Guide to Employers and A Sense of Pride-Guide for Parents. (See enclosures.) These brochures have been widely circulated throughout our geographical region as well as to other parts of Virginia's DRS and school locations.

3. An awareness/informtion reception was held for parents and Special Ed. students and local employers to come together and share their ideas and mutual concerns. Also the video and pamphlets were shown and disseminated.

Primary Objective #5

5. **To develop and implement an in-service training module for school personnel and DRS staff and an awareness module for parents and employers.**

In-service training was an on-going process from the on-set of the project. Attention was given primarily to local DRS staff and school personnel of the three (3) participating school divisions including administrators, Special Ed. teachers, and Guidance Counselors. During the course of the three (3) year grant, a variety of materials were developed to assist with in-service training. The final outline was developed so that specific in-service training modules could be assimilated according to the needs of the group.

Material packets developed include: transparencies, triptych display, pamphlets, fact sheets, slide presentation, video-geared to parents/employers but also suitable for professionals in DRS, schools and adult services, etc; student news letter, resource material from local adult service agencies and miscellaneous other in-service items.

The awareness module for parents and employers primarily consisted of the video (A Sense of Pride) and accompanying guides for parents and employers.

Specific accomplishments include:

1. Development and assimulation of in-service information and audio-visual materials which allows for a prescriptive approach to in-service, utilizing one of any combination of a variety of in-service materials.

2. Numerous formal and informal in-service presentations were made regularly to DRS and school personnel concerning the initiation and progress update of the project throughout the entire three (3) year period.

3. Joint in-service entitled "Teachers: Foundation In the Transitional Process" (November 1986). Training involving both the academic as well as vocational Special Education teachers in all three (3) participating school divisions (elementary and secondary levels).

4. Presentations to all three (3) School Boards of the participating school divisions during the course of the three (3) year grant period.

5. In-service material developed proved extremely helpful as project staff presented to various community agencies, organizations as well as a host of other activities including state and national conferences, university classes, parent/employer advisory groups, etc.

In addition, plans were underway (however not completed before project ended) to develop an in-service program to familarize teachers with available community resources and programs, through on-site visits during a scheduled day tour. It was discovered through preliminary in-service programs that most Special Education teachers did not have a basic working knowledge of community agencies and programs which were available, thereby prompting the informational tour.

Primary Objective #6

6. **To determine the effect of this project on the drop-out rate of disabled students.**

While developing the grant application, it was determined that the three (3) local school divisions did not have a consistent nor satisfactory means of determining the drop-out rate of disabled school students.

During the first year of the project, 1984-1985, a brief questionnaire was developed to provide a means for the Special Education Supervisor to uniformily and consistently provide drop-out data to the project. The results of the data supplied for school years 1984-86: are included in Table 3 below. (The table reflects the total number of identified handicapped students enrolled in grades 8-12 vs the total number of handicapped students dropping out W-8).

Table 3

(AUGUSTA/STAUNTON/WAYNESBORO)

Drop Out Rate
Handicapped Students

	School Year 84-85	85-86*	86-87
Waynesboro City Schools	11.00%	1.90%	5.00%
Staunton City Schools	14.00%	4.00%	3.00%
Augusta County Schools	6.90%	3.30%	1.18%

*During 1985-1986, the Department of Education implemented a new reporting system for drop outs, therefore the 1985-1986 figures are more valid than figures obtained in the 1984-1985 school year.

Since the project was unable to consistently collect adequate data, it is difficult to draw any significant conclusions from the above figure, or to determine what effect this project has had on reducing the drop-out rate for students with disabilities within the three participating school divisions. Subsequently, it was the consensus of project staff as well as school and DRS personnel associated with the project that the presence of the project did have a positive impact on students staying in school longer and certainly being able to access adult services more readily.

An indirect accomplishment was the establishment of a drop-out task force by one school system who is concentrating their efforts on prevention as well as intervention strategies.

Primary Objective #7

7. To evaluate the project and make a report with recommendations to the cooperating agencies.

Project Evaluation Plan

[Type of data/information being collected on students/clients:]

- Number referred to project services, intake/referral information, number receiving direct services, student/client demographics, student/client educational background data, student/client work experience background data assessment results for student/client, student/

client progress in training program, student/client follow-up status, student/client employment status, and student/client outcome status.

- On Employers:

  Level of direct service provided to employer/ employer satisfaction with student/client, project activities, etc. employer outcome status.

- On Post-Secondary Education:

  Level of direct service provided by project

- On Program:

  Program characteristics/demographics, program replication.

- Evaluation Approach(es):

  Goal based, goal free, professional review and case study.

- Personnel involved in evaluation activities:

  Project director, project staff, DRS assigned counselors, and advisory boards.

- Type of evaluation reporting and audience:

  Executive summary for consumers, state agencies and schools.

  Specific accomplishments include:

  1. Annual reports with recommendations were completed and disseminated to each of the three (3) participating school divisions DRS (local staff), Region II Administrator an DRS Central Office staff, OSERS (Project Staff) as well as to various groups and individuals requesting the report.

  2. Final Evaluation Report submitted to OSERS- March 1988.

  Primary Objective #8

  8. To develop and disseminate a replicable model of the Project to rural school districts in Virginia and other states.

Dissemination activities have been carried on throughout the entire three (3) year grant period. (Specific dissemination activities are identified later in this report).

This particular project model has proven successful and it is the firm belief of project staff and associated DRS and school personnel, that replication of all or parts of the model can be accomplished. This model is particularly suited for rural areas where resources may be limited and since much of the model can be accomplished in perscriptive fashion by cooperative and creative DRS/school personnel without the additional cost of staff, materials, etc.

Specific accomplishments include:

1. Developed a replication handbook detailing information concerning the Valley Transitional School Project and recommendations (See enclosures).

2. Results of the project were so positive that the three participating school systems (Augusta, Staunton, Waynesboro) and the local D.R.S. Field Office (Staunton) decided to continue to offer cooperative transitional school services once the grant ended September 1987. The school systems jointly agreed to fund one transitional school position (concentrating on case management and assessment issues). D.R.S. relocated one J.T.P.A. position assigned to the office to work exclusively with school age students as a job coach/case manager and also created one DRS specialized school caseload to work with students with disabilities in all three (3) school systems. This cooperative effort created a transitional team of three (3) staff to carry on with services previously provided by project staff.

(For additional dissemination activities, please refer to Section IV of this report).

Other Accomplishments/Milestones.

Although there were no specific goals or objectives regarding job placement outcomes, it's significant to note some employment statistics which to a large degree reflects the kinds of outcomes we feel can be achieved through multi-agency cooperation, early intervention and transitional planning.

Table 4

PROJECT EMPLOYMENT STATISTICS

April 1985-September 1987

	FY 85	FY 86	FY 87		TOTAL
Competitive Placements	12	28	45		85
Sheltered Facility Placements	1	2	1		4
Job Sharing	0	0	0		0
Volunteer Work	0	2	5		7
	13	32	51	=	96
	* (1)	(2)	(3)		(4)

*(1) Represents 8 different clients/students.
(2) Represents 22 different clients/students.
(3) Represents 34 different clients/students.
(4) Represents 64 different clients/students.

C. PROJECT SLIPPAGE

1. Objective Oriented Slippages

There were several areas whereby the project's accomplishments did not fully reach our original expectations. However, there were no significant slippages which prevented the project from attaining the originally stated objectives. Some problem areas included:

Objective #2 (Training Options)

We initially felt that students would be able to take more advantage of the various one-half day training options which were identified and made available. However, the majority of students stayed in the one-half day classroom and one-half day alternatives educational program (vocationally oriented) jointly operated by these three (3) school divisions. Several clients chose to attend Woodrow Wilson Rehabilitation Center for one-half day (actually 2 hours) of vocational training, and a few attended brief periods of assessment and work adjustment in our community based D.R.S. operated Work Adjustment facility (V.P.D.P.-Vocational and Personal Development Program). We found that the alternative education program was becoming more flexible, and since the logistics of transporting students away from school for community based options (i.e. OJT, etc) was not that feasible. Most of these options were utilized, however, following the students completion of their secondary eduation program.

Also while the majority of students served during the

first two years were TMR/EMR, the last year saw a movement towards working with more LD and ED and multiply handicapped students. Furthermore, it was felt that many of the severe and profoundly retarded students needed transitioning into day activity programs before moving into the vocationally oriented programs. (i.e. supported employment, sheltered employment.)

Objective #3 (Community Based Curriculum)

While much was accomplished with the development of the community based curriculum for the TMR/EMR students, project staff did meet with some resistance on the part of some of the teachers/school personnel involved with the Employment and Training Program (ETP).

Objective #4 (Parent/Employer Advisory Group)

Much was accomplished through this group, however, most of the work was completed by project staff. The group never quite developed into a productive or cohesive group. There seemed to be much confusion on the part of some parents and employers on the committee, concerning the purpose of the grant and their specific role and function. During our start-up years there was much written and communicated throughout the state, regarding the influx of transitional school to work projects, as well as other similar type grants operating in our locality, all of which added to the confusion. In retrospect we probably would not attempt to develop a separate parent/employer committee, but would select several parent/employers to become a part of our overall professional advisory committee. Therefore since we were really never able to fully clear up the ambivalence and overall confusion, nor were we able to effectively deal with the sterotypes many employers and parents have concerning students with severe disabilities, we never really gained the level of support or advocacy hoped for from this group.

Objective #6 (Drop-Out Rate)

What we really accomplished was a preliminary sense of what the drop-out rate was prior to the beginning of the project. However, we could never develop a system to obtain any conclusive evidence that the project did or did not have any effect on the drop-out rate, other than our feeling that we did have a positive effect. Presently the school divisions have a more uniform method of collecting and maintaining these statistics. Perhaps with the initiation of the new transitional school program starting in October 1987, the schools may be in a better

position to decide whether or not transitional school programs do in fact help students stay in a more appropriately developed school program.

Objective #7 (Evaluation Project)

Practically, all of the evaluation of the project objectives, were done so in-house. Project staff solicited help from a variety of outside resources in order to develop a more formal and more objective method of assessing our results, however, we were unable to obtain the consultation nor the technical assistance to do so.

Objective #8 (Dissemination)

Dissemination of project data, material and information was accomplished in a variety of ways. However, we feel that we have not yet reached the many rural school districts in our state or region, to the extent that we originally planned. Most of our contacts with rural school districts has been through local, state and national conferences. Hopefully, even though the project has ended, some additional dissemination activities can be coordinated through the central offices of the Department of Rehabilitative Services and Department of Education.

2. Slippages/Target Dates

When the grant was funded at the end of September 1984, arrangements concerning staffing, etc. were in place. However, when it was discovered by the school district which was to staff the project, that all staff would need to be covered under Virginia's unemployment insurance compensation plan, and that they would be solely reponsible for such compensation premiums, the arrangement was dissolved.

Each of the cooperating school divisions was in the same situation and all declined to staff the project. The Department of Rehabilitative Services (D.R.S.) was unable to add staff to its roster, as all Virginia state agencies were under a Governor mandated hiring freeze, and were being forced to reduce the overall number of full-time employees.

Other community resources were approached and asked to help. Finally, the local Community Services Board (C.S.B.), agreed to be the staffing agency under subcontract from D.R.S. As the contract was being drawn and approved, and as job advertisements were being readied, C.S.B. also changed its mind.

In mid-December 1984, Valley Workshops (now Vector Industries), a local not-for-profit sheltered facility which was to be a segment of the overall service plan of the project, agreed to handle contractor responsibilities. On December 15, 1984, the sub-contract became effective. Job advertisements were run, applications received and qualified applicants interviewed. In February 1985, the project coordinator was on board and other staff was hired by the end of March, 1985.

This unplanned sequence of events in start up caused delays in achieving many of the anticipated activity timelines for 1984-85. However, due to these delays, an unplanned activity occurred which brought about a closer working relationship between the cooperating agencies. Eight (8) persons representing the four (4) cooperating agencies formed a Professional Advisory Committee (P.A.C.) which carried out many of the project's activities which would normally have been largely handled by staff. This group of professionals identified members and began the identification and selection of student participants, and refined operating procedures for the Project.

Most of 1985 was spent playing catch-up, but staff were able to accomplish all of the essential activities as originally planned. It was also determined early on in the project that some of our initial activities and time tables were not realistic. This realization necessitated some revisions in our three (3) year plan.

3. Slippages (Miscellaneous)

While there were no major differences occurring between the originally stated objectives and the actual outcomes of project activities, the project did encounter its share of problems.

1) Once students finished school and were in need of obtaining adult services it became obvious that transportation was going to continue to be a significant problems, particularly for some clients living in the more remote portions of the county. However, most students were able to rely on family, neighbors, and their own resources (getting drivers education before leaving school) to take part in needed community services.

2) Personnel Turnover
Originally it was decided to staff the project with four (4) staff: (1-Project Coordinator; 1 Assessment Specialist; and 2-Job Coaches.) However, when the Project Coordinator resigned his position in July 1985, it was the consensus of project staff, Project Director and Contractor that it was not necessary to fill the vacancy. Therefore, the Project Coordinator's job duties were divided among the three (3) remaining staff and the Project Director (who also held a D.R.S. Program Supervisor position full-time), decided to serve as Project Coordinator as well. This move, proved to be an adequate solution, however, the project could have been even more effective with a full time Project Coordinator position. Also the local DRS counselor maintained a general field caseload in addition to her new project duties, thereby created additional time and caseload management problems.

3) Parental Interference
While the level of parental interference was certainly minimal with most students, there were occasions when a parents unrealistic expectations, or concern of losing a child's SSI benefits or just being over-protective got in the way. The project worked with 119 students and there were eight (8) occasions where parental interference precluded project staff from continuing to offer service. The following case studies illustrate the difference parental attitude can have on the employment outcome. These two examples "Charlie" and "Tom" have been selected based on their similar backgrounds and disabilities.

CASE STUDY ON "CHARLIE"

Charlie is a 20 year old mentally retarded youth who is living at home with both parents and a younger brother. Charlie's mother had a difficult labor and delivery. He was late to walk and had seizures at age two. His parents work full time. They live in a middle class residential neighborhood. Charlie gets along well with his family and they are very supportive and protective. They all enjoy family activities of camping and go-cart racing.

Charlie's intellectual testing placed him in the moderate mental retardation range with an IQ of 44. He has a secondary disability of Mild Spastic Cerebral Palsy, which results in a deficit in visual perception and auditory discrimination and inadequate visual motor integration. Charlie also has low self-confidence.

Charlie was involved in a residential school for children with behavior problems in 1973-74 because he was quiet, withdrawn, and would not participate in the public school program. He returned to public special education where he remained until his graduation in 1984.

In his high school years, he was provided with 1/2 day vocational alternative classes, where work behaviors and attitudes are addressed as well as independent living skills. When Charlie was a senior, he was advanced to a 1/2 day horticulture class where he was instructed in the care of plants. While in high school, Charlie was the basketball team manager.

In 1982, Charlie became a client of the Department of Rehabilitation. In his junior year, he was referred to a local comprehensive rehabilitation training center for a vocational evaluation. He was recommended for work adjustment along with vocational counseling. In August 1984, Charlie began a community based work adjustment training program to assist him with selecting a realistic vocational goal and to improve his self-confidence. He was paid incentive money while he was involved in work adjustment for seven months.

Charlie was placed in a temporary full-time job at a local nursery. The employer was offered Targeted Jobs Tax Credit through D.R.S. Charlie's responsibilities were filling planting trays with inserts and transferring seedlings from the transplanting area to the appropriate greenhouse. He had no problems with attendance or behaviors with others. He was job coached by the Valley Transitional School Project staff for less than one week on his specific job duties. Charlie gained more self confidence and he really seemed to enjoy it.

Even though the placement was temporary, it was a success. The problem has been with his parents in subsequent job placements. The next job offered to Charlie was a full-time/permanent job as a custodian 15 miles from home, working second shift. The parents refused the job because they were afraid to let Charlie drive that far at night.

After some discussion with the parents as to the location and hours desired, Charlie was offered a job as a grocery bagger in a local grocery store. His mother agreed because it was close to home. However, she called back later to say that they had no way to get him to work. She could not take time from her work to take him and they were not going to let him drive because their insurance was high enough on their other son.

After one year of unemployment, Charlie was offered a job as a dishwasher in a local restaurant, five miles from home. It involved working evenings and weekends. When Charlie's mother was called, she immediately asked if Charlie could have some weekends off so he could go to the go-cart races. Upon being told that he would not be able to take those weekends off, she declined the job because "you don't understand how important go-carting is to Charlie".

CASE STUDY ON "TOM"

Tom is a 19 year old mentally retarded youth who still lives with his parents and his two younger siblings. Tom was adopted at age four and was in foster care prior to that.

Both of Tom's adoptive parents finished high school and work full-time. Tom gets along well with family and peers. They live in a rural community and the family is very supportive.

Tom's intellectual testing placed him in the mild to moderate mental retardation range with a full scale IQ of 55. His visual perceptual and fine motor skills are considered to be quite weak. He has limited right arm movement. It is not known if this is congenital. Tom is quiet and shy.

Tom was referred to an educable mentally retarded classroom when he was in the third grade and he remained in that placement through his graduation in 1985. In his last four years in school, he was provided with 1/2 day vocational alternative classes, where work behaviors and attitudes were addressed as well as independent living skills.

In 1983, Tom became a client of the Department of Rehabilitation. In his junior year, Tom was referred to a local comprehensive rehabilitation training center for a vocational evaluation. It was observed that his work speed was slow but careful and thorough. In August 1984, Tom was evaluated at a local work adjustment program to assess his knowledge of work skills and behaviors. Tom was cooperative, but very shy. No money was paid to Tom during these evaluations

Tom first made himself known to the staff of the Valley Transitional School Project when he came in saying he wanted a job. He had made application with the Summer Youth Employment Program (Jobs Training Partnership Act).

Tom worked that summer as a janitor with a local school system. This was his first job and reports from his counselor were coming back as very good. He did have

problems with neatness in painting, so he was moved to other jobs. There were no problems with attendance or cooperation with others.

Toward the end of his eight week job, the D.R.S. Placement Counselor asked him to work for a local manufacturing firm. The On-the-Job Training position was for a box maker-order filler on second shift, which would leave him with only one coworker. Tom, his family, and VTSP staff felt that he was ready.

The job required him to not only know how to do the job tasks, but also to have the judgement to know when to switch duties in order to keep production going smoothly. He was job coached by VTSP staff for six days. He was always at work 15 minutes early and worked his 10 hour shift.

Up to this point, Tom's parents had transported him to work. Now they were willing to help him buy a car with money he had saved from his first job. The first night at work at the manufacturing firm, Tom drove himself to work.

Tom started having prblems with his work after two months on the job. His co-workers had covered for him long enough, he was simply not working. Knowing this would be the last time for intervention, the job coach was allowed to come back. Tom realized the severity of almost losing his job. Again, he was ready to work.

Today Tom is doing well at work. He has opened a checking account and has become more independent. His mother and the plant supervisor have set up communications that allows for a free exchange of information. Lately, the supervisor called to say that she just wanted to let the parents know how well Tom is doing at work. Tom's parents and supervisor have continued to be a support system for his on-going success.

II. Characteristics of Population and Environment.

A. Client Demographic Data

Project data regarding the number of handicapped youth served; type of handicapping conditions represented and age ranges are shown in Table 5:

Table 5

VALLEY TRANSITIONAL SCHOOL PROJECT (1984-1987)

(Client Demographic Data)
Age Range 16-23 (●)

Disability	Number	
Educable Mentally Retarded (EMR)	32	(27%)
Trainally Mentally Retarded (TMR)	4	(.03%)
Learning Disabled (LD)	20	(17%)
Emotionally Disturbed (ED)	4	(.03%)
*Multi-Handicapped (MH)	59*	(50%)
TOTAL	119	

*Students classified as either EMR, TMR, or LD and who had one or more of the following diagnosis: epilepsy, cerebral palsy, speech or hearing disorder, physical impairment, Down Syndrome, hypertension, diabetes, cardiac problems, etc.

EMR	32
TMR	8
LD	19
TOTAL	59*

- Project eligibility criteria allowed for any special education eligible student who was within three (3) years of graduation/program completion (G-3) to be served. The only other stipulation was that the student must have identified prevocational/vocational needs and be enrolled in either the Augusta County, Staunton or Waynesboro City School systems.

B. Environmental Conditions

The principal participants of this grant were all located in Augusta County, Virginia-(School Systems of Augusta County, Staunton City and Waynesboro City and the Staunton Field office of the Virginia Departmentof Rehabilitative Services).

Augusta County is centrally located within the historic and scenic Shenandoah Valley in West Central Virginia. Staunton, the county seat, is an important educational, retail, commercial and governmental center. Waynesboro, 13 miles east of Staunton, is a significant commercial and industrial nucleus.

Augusta County is bounded on the west by the lower elevation of the Alleghany Mountains and on the east by the crest of the Blue Ridge Mountains and is agriculturally and industrially based. The headwaters of two major rivers, the James and the Potomac, are located in Augusta County.

Interstates 81 and 64 intersect within the county one mile east of Staunton. Augusta County is approximately 85 miles north of Roanoke; 100 miles West of Richmond; 150 miles Southwest of Washington, D.C. The Augusta County, Staunton, and Waynesboro area is about midway between New York and Altanta.

Augusta County is the second largest (land area) county in Virginia, encompassing 968 square miles. The Augusta County Staunton-Waynesboro area has been considered a single labor market area. The three jurisdictions share similar characteristics and are economically interrelated.

Unemployment for the area, throughout the course of the project, has stayed around the state average of just below state average. Current unemployment figures as of October 1987 for the area is at 3.4%

Considering the three jurisdictional units (i.e. Augusta, Staunton and Waynesboro), as one community, the area has ample support services available. There are eight state institutions and treatment facilities located within the area. The area has a diverse industrial/agriculurial base; foster care programs offering some supervised living situations as well as several group/transitional living housing alternatives; active consumer advocacy groups are represented;transportation services for the City of Staunton, and excellent cooperation among human service agencies as well as with the private business/professional sector.

(Currently, there are six (6) different interagency coordinating/networking groups functioning in the area.)

In addition to services offered by the Department of Education and Department of Rehabilitative Services the area is also fortunate to have representatives from a wide variety of related services made available by a local Community Services Board (MH/MR and Substance Abuse); Governor's Employment and Training Department Job Training and Partnership Act (JTPA) programs; Department of Visually Handicapped and the Department of Deaf and Hearing Impaired offices. Community and institutional based work adjustment programs, as well as specialized services offered by Woodrow Wilson Rehabilitation Center (i.e. L.D. Program, Head Trauma and Deaf Programs, Spinal Cord Injury Programs, etc.) There are also many active and helpful organizations offering support services such as the Salvation Army, Valley Rescue Mission, the Staunton-Augusta Church Relief Association etc.

Barriers to service delivery within the local community are much like other small rural areas across Virginia and other parts of the country. The major barriers include: transportation problems for those students residing in the more remote areas of the county; inadequate low-cost housing options including supervised transitional housing alternatives; lack of support and active involvement on the part of some parents and employers and their lack of knowledge concerning the capabilities of youth with disabilities, all of which created additional employment barriers for project students. In addition, the local area is considered a 'high impact' area due to the number of major institutions (8) housed in the immediate area whose primary mission is to offer services to persons with disabilities (i.e. State Mental hospital; State Comprehensive Rehabilitation facility; State School for deaf and blind; two major correctional institutions, etc). This high impact status has contributed in part, to the often times mixed messages received by many employers regarding the pros and cons of hiring persons with disabilities, and while the presence of all of these instituions reap many benefits, their presence also contributes to the barriers (i.e. stereotypes) which needed to be addressed by staff throughout the transitional process.

III. Evaluation Activities

A. Outcome Evauation

1. a. Employment Demographics

Table (6-10) illustrates various employment related data collected from March 1985 through September 1987. Staff also conducted a brief follow-up survey detailing the employment status as of January 1988 of all of those students placed in employment.

Table 6

VALLEY TRANSITIONAL SCHOOL PROJECT

Employment Project Demographics

Jurisdictional (LEA) Data	Augusta	Staunton	Waynesboro
- Number of Students Participating	77 (64%)	21 (18%)	21 (18%)
- Sex	41/M-36F	11M/10F	15M/6F
(Total Project = Male 56% and Female 44%)			
- Average Age at Referral	17.9	17.3	17.2
(Range 15-23 years old)			
(Total Average Age 17.5)			
- Race - Caucasian/C	74/C=96%	13/C=62%	17/C=81%
Negro/N	3/N= 4%	8/B=38%	4/N=19%
(Total Project = 104 - 87% Caucasian			
15 - 13% Negro			

(Note: Estimated % of minority population - Augusta County 5%; Staunton 10%; Waynesboro 7%.)

Table 7

VALLEY TRANSITIONAL SCHOOL PROJECT

Placement/Employment Data
March 1985 - September 1987

	FY 85	FY 86	FY 87		TOTAL
Competitive Employment Placement	12	28	45	=	85
Sheltered Employment Placements	1	2	1	=	4
Job Sharing	0	0	0	=	0
Volunteer Work	0	0	5	=	5
TOTAL	13	30	51	=	94*

(*94 Placements were made with 64 Students)

Follow-up Data Effective February 1988
Employment Status

**Still Employed (As of February 1988)	38
Self Terminations	28
Fired	16
Job Ending (Seasonal, etc.)	12

**Of the 94 placements, 18 should be considered as temporary placements since the jobs were scheduled to end within a given period of time. The remaining 76 placements were considered permanent. Therefore, the 38 students still employed represents an approximate 50% job retention rate at the end of the grant period.

Table 8

VALLEY TRANSITIONAL SCHOOL PROJECT

Competitive Employment Data

(Figures do not include 9 students involved in either sheltered employment or volunteer work)

Placements	85	
Average Hours Worked	30	
Average Starting Salary (Range $2.85 to $6.25/Hour)	$3.76	
Subsidized Employment	22	(26%)
Job Coach Intervention Required	24	(28%)
Full Time (40 Hour) Placements 41/85	41	(48%)

Table 9

VALLEY TRANSITIONAL SCHOOL PROJECT

Occupational
(N-94 Placements)

Food Service	(32%)	30
Maintenance	(15%)	14
Manufacturing (i.e. production, etc.)	(13%)	12
Landscaping	(10%)	9
Auto Service/Mechanics	(07%)	7
Health & Domestic Related Occupations	(05%)	5
Volunteer (Voc. Tech. School, High Schools, Librarians, etc.)	(05%)	5
Poultry Processing Plants		4
Retail Stores (i.e. inventory, stocking, etc.)		3
Farm Work		2
Security Work		1
Lumber Mill		1
Furniture Refinishing		1

Table 10

VALLEY TRANSITIONAL SCHOOL PROJECT

(Disability Related Placement Data)
N=38 Students Still Employed in Competitive Jobs
(As of February 1988)

Educable Mentally Retarded	24	(62%)
Learning Disabled	12	(32%)
Trainable Mentally Retarded	1	(03%)
Emotionally Disturbed	1	(03%)
TOTAL	38	

III. Evaluation Activities

Barriers to Placement

During the three (3) years of the grant, four (4) primary barriers to employment were identified: student behavior, transportation, lack of work ethic/value and lack of parental support.

Student behavior appeared to be the primary reason that students either did not get hired, were terminated, or voluntarily quit their jobs. Although the behaviors were often as varied as the individuals, there were some similarities noted:

1. Unrealistic work expectations. Students discovered that an eight hour work day made them tired; that work conditions were not ideal, i.e. maybe too hot or too cold for their liking, and that work schedules interfered with personal activities.

2. Immaturity. Most of the students maturity level seemed to lag behind their chronological ages.

3. Not following employer instructions. In cases where a student's disability was the main reason for not following employer instructions, Valley Transitional School Project would intervene. However, more often than not, a student's attitude of "I know more than the employer" was the main barrier.

4. Reliable/Dependability. Coming to work on a regular basis and/or being late was a problem for some students.

5. Poor interpersonal skills. Many students lacked good judgement in choosing appropriate subjects to discuss with co-workers. For example, one young man repeatedly talked about how good looking he was during his breaks. Another young woman told everyone on her first day of employment that she recently had an abortion.

6. Worker expectations. Often when students began work they were slow, so co-workers would pick up the slack. However, as the student's speed increased and they were given their normal workload to do, the students perceived that others were trying to "dump" all the work on them.

Transportation. Transportation was a negative factor during the grant. V.T.S.P. served Augusta County and the cities of Staunton and Waynesboro. Augusta is one of the largest counties in Virginia and the city of Waynesboro does not have a public transportation system. Therefore, unless a student lived on the Staunton bus route or had their own transportation, employment options were limited. A few students were able to car pool, but his option had limited success. As expected, most students had to rely on personal transportation. This presented problems since many students were unable to drive due to their disability. Others were not able to drive because parents disapproved. Still, others did not follow through in obtaining their driver's license while in school. Some families did not have an extra vehicle available for the student to drive or the student's own vehicle was unreliable and needed frequent repairs.

Lack of work ethic/value. Students who exhibited this attitude often came from homes where other family members did not work or did not place much value on working. Some students who fell in this category were those who had never been given much responsibility at home.

Lack of parental support. This was an important barrier to employment. Again, reasons were varied, but can be best explained by examing parental attitudes. Some parents were fearful of their child losing S.S.I. benefits. Others seemed overprotective, fearing that their child would encounter prejudices in the workplace that would be detrimental to their child as well as themselves. Others hindered placement efforts by not initially transporting their child to and from work. Additionally, while some parents did not discourage their child from working, they also did not encourage or support it.

III. Evaluation Activities

Economic Influence

Throughout the course of the project, a number of economic incentives and disincentives were identified and dealt with as they related to the students, parents, agencies involved with transitioning as well as employers.

The general feeling among project staff and agencies closely associated with the grant activities, was that there were a number of significant opportunities made available which offered a wide variety of economic incentives. However, for some students and parents the few disincentives prevailed and became a substantial barrier to employment (i.e. Supplemental Security Income-S.S.I.; and Aid to Dependent Children benefits-ADC).

Major contributing incentives for students, parents, agencies and employers are listed below:

A. Supported Employment Services (Job Coaching)
B. Transitional 'team efforts' and the networking provided by project staff, school and DRS personnel and other local human service delivery agencies.
C. Collaborative placement assistance made available by DRS staff, JTPA Job Coach, and school personnel.
D. On the Job Training and Unpaid Work Experience options made available by DRS.
E. Targeted Job Tax Credits made available to employers.
F. Changes in Social Security legislation which provided extended income support and medical services protection for students with disabilities who want to work but have been afraid of losing SSI and medical benefits.
G. Employers were provided workers with basic entry level skills and worker traits as a result of the schools efforts in providing viable vocational options and work related experiences prior to the students leaving school.
H. Employers were offered employee screening services, by project staff being in a position to share with the employer a students work related strengths and limitations as well as being available to provide close monitoring of a students placement.

Disincentives, while fewer in number, were found to have a significant impact with some students and parents. The three primary negative influences, included SSI benefits, ADC payments and parental attitude.

A. S.S.I. Benefits. While recent changes in the Social Security laws have offered greater flexibility and more options to recipients, many parents are still somewhat reluctant to risk losing benefits for their child. "Not wanting to lose SSI benefits" was the reason given in approximately 10% of the cases when a parent/student chose not to participate in the project or cooperate with placement efforts.

B. ADC Benefits. During the course of the grant four (4) participants became pregnant. Prior to the pregnancy all four indicated a desire to work, however, once they starting receiving Aid to Dependent Children Benefits, they lost interest in employment and chose to remain at home and receive public asistance.

C. Parental Attitudes. Parental attitude was another significant factor contributing to placement disincentives. It seemed that if the parents were in agreement with the type of job placement made, then the chances of the student succeeding improved. However, the fear of interrupting a student's SSI benefits; the unwillingness or perhaps inability of the parents to try and promote a stronger work ethic with their child and the element of over protectiveness (i.e afraid their child would get hurt or be exploited), all signifi-significantly overshadowed the incentives made available for some students. Also, some parents had unrealistic vocational goals for their child which blocked some placement efforts (i.e. A parent of an EMR student who felt computer programming was a realistic goal.)

III. Evaluation Activities

Job Retention Factors

A review of the students who were successfully placed and those who were able to retain their jobs at the time the project ended, indicate several key factors which seemed to influence job retention.

1. High level of parental encouragement and support provided.

2. Job coaching and case management services which allowed for much closer job follow-up and problem solving efforts on behalf of project staff. The ability to have the time to offer close monitoring of placment efforts allowed for greater interagency collaboration and timely intervention when problems occurred. (This is seen as a significant factor since neither the schools, nor DRS staff wre able to provide this service due to time and staffing restraints.

3. Coordinated placement efforts were provided by project personnel, school staff, and DRS placements specialists. This not only helped with sharing job leads but was instrumental in reducing duplication efforts with other agencies such as VEC as well as employers in the area who are usually inundated with service professionals hunting job openings.

4. Co-worker acceptance was also instrumental in contributing to job success and job retention of many students. Project staff found that even though students had the skills to perform a particular job, but lacked good interpersonal skils, the job was almost always terminated. However, if a student's work speed was somewhat slower or if the quality of work was reduced, but had good interpersonal skills, the employer and co-workers were more willing to work with the student to help them maintain employment. Often times with a little extra support from the co-workers, the students could raise their level of work performance. Therefore, much like the work force in general, those students with the best interpersonal skills, good work habits and the desire to work were those who were the most successful in retaining employment.

III. Evaluation Activities

Placement Influencing Agents

The primary factors which seemed to have the most positive influence on job placements have been addressed earlier. A brief listing/summary of these are provided below.

1. Job coaching model.
2. Increase case management services
3. Excellent placement support from the community and agencies associated with the project (i.e. DRS, schools, JTPA programs operating in the area, VEC, Employment & Training Corp. and Job Shops, Inc., Summer Youth Employment

Program).

4. Increased awareness, receptiveness and active support offered on the part of parents/employers.
5. Low unemployment rate for the local area throughout grant period.
6. Community networking/team approach among service delivery agencies.
7. Improved student assessment/evaluation data which was made available. Particularly, the input from project staffs' classroom observations, and participation by the classroom teachers, which in the past seemed to be somewhat of an overlooked resource.

III. Evaluation Activities

Unsuccessful Placement - (Reasons for Job Loss)

Table #11 illustrates project participant status two (2) months following the end of grant period in November 1987.

Table 11

VALLEY TRANSITIONAL SCHOOL PROJECT

Participant Status as of November 20, 1987

Competitively Employed	31
Sheltered Employment	4
Still Enrolled in School	33
Community Training/Assessment Programs	7
Self-Terminated from Project	15
Uncooperative Parent/s	8
Moved	14
Other (i.e. job searching, etc.)	7
TOTAL	119

As of November 1987, approximately 60 students were carried from the project into the permanent transitional services program jointly funded by the three LEA's, DRS, and JTPA.

Incidently, of the sixty-five (65) students who were available for employment (i.e. not enrolled in training, etc) thirty-five,(54%) were still employed as of our January 1988, follow-up survey.

Reasons for job loss are divided into two (2) categories. Those who quit and those who were fired. Table 12 shows the various reasons given and the frequency:

Table 12

VALLEY TRANSITIONAL SCHOOL PROJECT

Job Loss Data

Reasons for Quitting:	
Did Not Like Type of Work	9
Left for Another Job	3
Not Getting Enough Hours	2
Did Not Like Supervisor/Co-Workers	2
Not Enough Money	2
Work Conditions (i.e. Too Hot, Too Cold)	2
Anger Control/Impulsive Behavior	2
No Parental Support	1
Child Care Problems	1
Drop-Out School	1
TOTAL	25
Reasons for Being Fired:	
Inappropriate Work Behavior (i.e. Wasting Time, Off Task, Socializing Too Much)	4
Attendance Problems	4
Worked Too Slow Pace	4
Transportation Problems	2
Trouble Accepting Supervision	1
Poor Personal Hygiene	1
	16

(N=30 Students representing TOTAL Terminations/Quittings = 41)

Reasons for job separation of project students who were competitively employed during the three (3) years grant period were analyzed. Of the 41 separations that occurred, 83% were caused by employee related reasons (eg. behavioral/attitude problems, skills deficits, etc). The remaining 17% were caused by various external factors (eg. childcare, transportation, voluntarily changed job.)

III. Evaluation Activities
(Outcome Evaluation)

b. Post Secondary Education Demographics

Only seven (7) students entered a training facility once their public school program ended. Of the seven (7), five (5) were involved in post-secondary vocational training activities. All five of these students were enrolled at a local comprehensive rehabilitation facility (Woodrow Wilson Rehabilitation Center). The other two (2) were involved in a Mental Retardation work-oriented community facility. The specific training areas and the disability types of the five students are:

A. Welding (1 Learning Disabled)

B. Food Service (1 M.R., 1 L.D.)

C. Auto Mechanics (1 L.D.)

D. Custodian (1 M.R.)

There were no particular barriers encountered in successfuly assimilating these students into W.W.R.C.'s program.

The primary incentives for these students and parents to continue with their vocational education was DRS' financial support. provided for tuition, room and board, supplies, etc. (All four (4) met DRS's financial eligibility criteria). In addition to the financial support there was ample support services provided by project staff, school, DRS personnel and the student's parents.

These four (4) students chose W.W.R.C. because of the comprehensive nature of programs offered (i.e. could get driver's education, housing, therapies, etc), the close proxamity to their homes and the quality of training offered.

Those who did not wish to continue with additional post secondary training, chose employment or looking for employment in order to earn income and also because they simply were tired of school. Also, it should be noted that the LEA's in-house program, (i.e. Employment Training Program) did a nice job of preparing students, skill wise, to gain entry level positions (i.e. food service, labor, custodial, horticultural, etc.)

There were only two (2) students who did not complete their W.W.R.C. program. One student (LD) was terminated after one month due to her refusal to accept supervision while the second student (MR) was terminated after four (4) month of absenteeism and violating Center rules. The three students successfully completing their vocational programs were involved in training for 12 months (Welding), 12 months (Auto Mechanics), and 6 months (Food Service), (all within the normal course requirements). Also, all are presently employed in the areas in which they were trained.

III. Evaluation Activities

B. Process Evaluation

1. Problem Definition

Significant issues or barriers that impacted on project implementation and completion have been discussed earlier. Please refer to the Project Slippage section of this report for a review of these issues.

Several issues did emerge which are related to process barriers created by existing agency policies and procedures, these barriers are:

1. The fact that LD & ED students are not allowed to participate in a full day vocational evaluation during the school year.

2. The local school systems inconsistent policy concerning work study payment (i.e. TMR & EMT students are apparently not provided with a work stipend while other students with disabilities and students who are categorized as being disadvantaged are provided work stipends.

3. Create for placement (positive terminations) can only be taken by one contractor thereby sometimes creating competition and or reluctance to transfer the case to another contractor who may be providing more substantial services.

2. Program Features

The project design as shown on page 2, identifies the three (3) main program features. Namely, the assessment; training and placement components. Other than case management and job coaching and placement services, project staff did not directly provide any formalized assessment or training programs. The idea was to basically coordinate and manage those services already available within the community and among participating (primary and secondary) agencies.

Another feature of the project design was to allow for a recycling effect to occur so that students, if necessary, could be processed more than once, through all three components. The assesment normally began during the student's sophomore and junior year of school. Graduation minus -3 and -2, while most training options were geared to take place during the

students last year, the placement process would formally begin during the latter part of the students final year and would continue once the student exited school.

The program also features a 'bridge' from those services provided to a student while in school to those adult services needed following graduation. This transitional component occurred with most agencies and community organizations and services being involved from the onset of the individualized transitional plan (ITP), rather than waiting until the student finished and was then 'passed on' to an adult service provider.

(a) Assessment

The model allows for and encourages assessment data to be collected from a variety of sources and in a variety of situations. The project design identifies four key areas of assessment.

1. Classroom. Includes academic classroom data as well as information obtained from the vocational education teachers in th Employment and Training Programs (ETP). Prior to he implementation of the project the teacher generated information was usually not shared with DRS and adult service providers.
(Provided by LEA's)

2. DRS-Community Based Work Adjustment
(Vocational & Personal Development Program-VPDP)
This community based program offered a two-week situational assessment as well as a individualized training plan for work adjustment services.
(Provided by D.R.S.)

3. Comprehensive Vocational Evaluation
(Woodrow Wilson Rehabilitation Center-WWRC)
A comprehensive vocational evaluation is designed to assist students in determining their vocational capabilities based on existing skills and the potential for new areas of development. Services provided include counseling, standardized tests, work sample evaluation, vocational exploration and job analysis. Most students are evaluated during the fall of their junior years of school.
(Provided by DRS/WWRC)

4. Employer Assessment A viable assessment option made available to the majority of students participating in the project through individual assessments arranged by school and DRS staff as well as active involvement with the summer youth employment program during the summers prior to graduation (normally during the summer following the sophomore and junior years of school.)
(Provided by Community Employers and Job Training Partnership Act-JTPA).

The assessment process was coordinated and managed by one project staff assigned this specific role. The duties not only involved developing (with LEA's and DRS) individualized assessment plans for each student but also required active involvement with the students in other assessment areas (i.e. classroom observations, W.W.R.C. vocational evaluation), and a close working relationship with DRS/VPDP staff to assist with prescriptive assessment, etc. Once a student had been through their assessment period a decision was reached by the transitional team, (primarily the student, parent, LEA's and DRS) as to what training options would be utilized during the last year. Although most students progressed through this process, the model would allow for direct job placement to take place from assessment if indicated.

B. Training Component

Conceptually, the model allows for the utilization of various training options. However, we found that most students attended 1/2 day of academics in the classroom and then participated 1/2 day in the employment training programs. Training options made available and used to a limited extend included:

1. Job Seeking Skills Training
   (Provided by DRS and Schools)

2. Specific vocational training skills.
   Training provided by ETP, local vocational/ tech school and WWRC.
   (Provided by Schools and DRS/WWRC).

3. Transitional Employment Options
   Such as OJT, Unpaid Work Experiences provided by both the LEA's and DRS. As well as several local JTPA funded community placement programs.
   (Provided by DRS)

4. Work Adjustment Training
Provided by DRS both at WWRC as well as in the community based program located 7 miles away. (Provided by DRS)

C. Placement Component

This component probably involved more community/ agencies than the previous two. Placement responsibilities were primarily managed by the job coach provided by the project with excellent support provided by community agencies such as JTPA programs, Virginia Employment Commission; and DRS placement staff.

The majority of placement options were utilized with competitive employment being the heaviest use (see Table 7). In addition to working closely with area employers and other support agencies such as Vector Industries (sheltered employment), Gateway Enterprises (Mental Retardation Services operated work program) and public agencies providing volunteer work experiences, all were a vital part of our placement efforts.

Project staff originally anticipated a greater use of volunteer placements, sheltered workshop and job sharing (part-time placements); however the reverse was true in that competitive placements far exceeded all other placement options. This occurred we feel as a result of the closer case management and follow-up services provided by our job coaching/case management staff. (With most agency counselors having to manage large caseloads, it apparently was not hard to lose many of these students in the system 'cracks').

Outside Funding

Outside funding sources involved, other than the LEA's and DRS (grant participants) included: only the local Job Training & Partnership Act which provided some consultations and assistance with job coaching and placement, and the local Community Services Board-M.R. Services division for unpaid consultation and assessment of some students for their programs.

Some additional consultation services were obtained from DRS's Central Office, Grants Management Division and support staff and technical assistance provided by the Secondary Transitional Institute in Urbaba, Champaign, University of Illinois.

Increased/Student Independence

Our project did not maintain any objective data concerning evidence of increased student independence in the areas of mobility, independent living skills, vocational gains, behavior change, etc. However, subjective evidence gathered from parents, student, school and DRS personnel, employers, etc. strongly indicate that gains were indeed made by students (to varying degrees), in all major life skills areas. Significant behavioral change, however,were probably the most difficult to accomplish, a concern that DRS and school staff alike, feel should have greater emphasis in the elementary and secondary special education curriculum.

Consumer Satisfaction

Consumer satisfaction/dissatisfaction with our projects services can probably best be illustrated by the fact that of the 119 students enrolled in the project, 23 discontinued participation due to either the student self-terminating or the parents not willing to cooperate with project staff (Total N = 119 students, 23 failed to stay with project, representing 19% who were 'dissatisfied' and 81% apparently satisfied in that they continued with project services). The three LEA's and DRS were satisfied however, with project outcomes, to the extend they combined forces to fund a transitional school position; created a DRS/JTPA job coach position to work exclusively with school students and realinged one caseload to become a specialized DRS school caseload, thereby creating a three person transitional team to continue with transitional services.

IV. Dissemination Activities

Dissemination activities for the project will be divided by each grant year.

Year One - Spring 1984 - Fall 1985

1. In service to all three LEA's and DRS regarding grant, project design, etc.

2. Participation in the transition from School to Employment Mini-Conference sponsored by Virginia Institute for Developmental Disabled/Virginia Commonwealth University, Richmond, Virginia.

3. Presentation to Regional Special Education Supervisor - Re: Valley Transitional School project transitional programming.

4. Development of a cooperative working relationship with two other local grants; the Parent Involvement Project, (Charlottesville) and PERT project located at Woodrow Wilson Rehabilitation Center.

5. Several articles were developed by the Staunton News Leader and also in several DRS quarterly publications.

6. A presentation was made to several civic clubs and appearances by VTSP staff on two radio programs were also provided.

7. A pamphlet has been developed for parents and employers and a quarterly newsleader was initiated in September 1985.

Project staff and members of the advisory committees were engaged in numerous other activities such as volunteering with the area Special Olympics organization, our local Special Education Awareness week and informal discussions with Virginia Commonwealth University, Virginia Tech., and University of Virginia regarding transitioning issues.

Year Two - Fall 1985-Fall 1986

1. Project Update (In-Service) to Augusta County School personnel.
2. Presentation to Staunton City School Board.
3. Presentation at George Washington University conference titled "Trends in Transition".
4. Presentation of Slide Program to Staunton/ Augusta County Rotary Club.
5. Presentation to Staunton Association for Retarded Citizens.
6. Presentation to Spottswood Ruritan Club.
7. Program for Augusta County Special Education Advisory Committee.
8. Presentation to Waynesboro City Schools Special Education teachers and parents.
9. Presentation to George Mason University Special Education undergraduate class.

Year Three - Fall 1986 - Fall 1987

1. Conducted a personal development group dealing with self-esteem for six weeks for the Employment Training Program (ETP), Level I.
2. Arranged for a "Dress for Success" workshop for ETP Level II students.
3. Presented at a conference on Career Development Programs for the Handicapped in June 1987 in Charlottesville.
4. Participated in the Virginia Association of Special Needs Personnel Summer Conference and Fall Regional Workshop.
5. Became members of the Augusta County Schools Drop-Out Prevention Committee.
6. Became member of a local inter-agency coordinating committee.
7. Conducted a 'Work Readiness' group for EMR Seniors attending DRS' community based WAT program.
8. Coordinated with the local JTPA/Summer Youth Employment program for grant participants.
9. Parent/Employer Advisory Committee developed two Public Relations functions to introduce the pamphlets and video.
10. Participated and co-sponsored an EMR class spaghetti dinner in conjunction with Augusta County Schools Special Education Advisory Committee during Special Education Awareness week.
11. Arranged for a week of vocational exploration and community resource awareness for EMR students.

12. Presentation to Augusta County and Waynesboro City School boards.
13. Presentation to James Madison University Special Education class on 'Persistent Life Problems of the Handicapped'.
14. Presentation to a family support group of local parents of student who are mentally retarded.
15. Displayed at a national 'Vital' conference held in Williamsburg, Virginia.

Many benefits were received from these outreach efforts, foremost being the opportunity to learn what other projects around the state and country were doing and to be able to share the uniqueness of this project as it relates to a relatively small semi-rural area. In addition, all of the activity provided locally to civic groups, colleges, and community agencies and organizations helped to enhance the parent/employer/school/adult service relationships and helped to increase the awarenes of the abilities and needs of youth with disabilities.

We received calls and requests for information from across the state and country as a result of our outreach efforts. Locally there was a marked increase in the number of referrals from teachers and the support for the project from the three (3) school boards and special education advisory groups were excellent. Staff felt the board members were given an opportunity to learn more about the needs for an integrated transitional school program and by being more informed, were able to be supportive of the school administration efforts to continue funding of transitional school services.

In addition, Valley Transitional School Project staff were involved in Virginia's statewide transitional efforts, namely Project P.E.R.T. (Post-Secondary Education/Rehabilitation Transition for the Mildly Mentally Retarded and Learning Disabled); Project V.I.T.A.L. (Virginia Integrated Transition Approach Through Leadership) and Project V.A.S.T. (Virginia'a Approach to Services for Transitioning Youth and Young Adults with Disabilities).

This exposure helped with project dissemination while providing current data on trend and developments occurring across Virginia.

Methods of Dissemination

Dissemination of project material occurred through a variety of methods.

1. Quarterly newsletter to parents, school and DRS personnel.
2. Fact sheet on project data and transitional services in general.
3. Parent/Employer Pamphlets (Guides).
4. Slide presentation of project services.
5. Video entitled 'A Sense of Pride'.
6. Development of Operations Handbook.
7. Development of Triptych display.
8. Numerous presentations at conferences, civic groups, in-service, etc.
9. Radio talk shows (local stations).
10. Exhibits and displays at community events.
11. Newspaper articles describing project efforts and the cooperative ventures of three (3) school divisions and a state agency.
12. Enthustic conversation by project staff with consumers, agency representatives and willingness to share project information.

Methods used for the dissemination of project products included handouts at state and national conferences, and through the active cooperation and participation with Transition Institute at Illinois.

Also, copies of the video were made for each grant participant (3 LEA's and DRS) and other copies were made available upon request: Pamphlets (Parent/Employer guides) were shared with DRS staff in the area and across Virginia; information concerning the project along with available abstracts, handouts, pamphlets etc. were shared with those requesting the information within Virginia and across the country.

Specific request for information and the means by which the request was met are as follows:

1. James Madision University (Presentation)
2. George Mason University (Presentation)
3. Virginia Tech and State University (Project Material)
4. George Washington University (Presentation)
5. Virginia Commonwealth University (Project (Material)
6. V.I.T.A.L. Conference (Displayed)
7. University of Illinois
   Secondary Transition Intervention-Effectiveness Institute (Data/Completion of Questionnaires)

8. University of Washington -Seattle College of Education (Project Material & Phone Conversation and Letters)
9. Research Triangle Institute Center for Education Studies - North Carolina (Project Material Sent)
10. Trends in Transition Conference: A Regional Focus on Partnership Innovations, Practices and Technology (Participant/Material Sent)
11. Erie Co. Board of Mental Retardation & Developmental Disabilities - 4405 Galloway Road, Sandusky, Ohio 44870 (Project Material Sent)
12. Indiana University - Center of Innovation in Teaching the Handicapped, 2805 East 10th St. Suite 150, Bloomington, Indiana 47405 (Project Material Sent)
13. Health Resource Center - 1 Dupont Circle, N.W. Suite 670, Washington, D.C. 20036-1193 (Project Material Sent)
14. Transitional School Project, Project Director, Great Falls Public Schools, 2100 16th Avenue S. Great Falls, Montana 59405 (Project Material Sent)
15. Parent Involvement Program, 164 Rugby Road, Charlottesville, VA 22903 (Project Material & Meetings Sent)
16. William Phelps, Chief, School Services, State Board of Vocational Education, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, State Capital Building, Charleston, West Virginia 25305 (Project Material Sent).
17. The Parents Graduation Alliance, University of Oregon, College of Education, Eugene, Oregon 47403 (Project Material Sent)
18. Whittier Union High School District, Career Assessment & Placement Center, 9401 South Painter Avenue, Whittier, California 90603 (Project Material Sent)

V. Replication

The replication of this type of project is based on the premise that successful transitioning from school to post-secondary opportunities for the severely handicapped student requires a complex array of services and resources. These students, their parents and professionals alike, are often faced with uncertainty concerning the availability of services, agency eligibility requirements and the most direct and successful approach to use when accessing adult services. Effective transitioning from school to adult life, requires that relevant community opportunities and

service combinations be developed to address individual student needs through integrated transitional planning and effective case management services.

As with many transitional school models developed throughout the country, our model emphasizes the shared responsibility of all involved parties to ensure the success of our collective transitional efforts.

The Valley Transition School model was designed to address two (2) primary service options.

1. To provide a continium of appropriate vocation programs and services which include early assessment, vocational counseling, work adjustment, and other prevocational services, independent living skills development, vocational exploration opportunities, skills training and job placement/job retention service, and

2. To promote an education/rehabilitation service delivery system which allows for a smooth transition of the severely disabled students from schools to independent employment and successful life adjustments.

Another main feature of the replication process involved in this particular model, is the acceptance that local education agencies and State Rehabilitation Agencies share lead responsibility in promoting and developing transitional school services. Given the fact that both the Department of Education and the State Rehabilitation Agency are responsible for statewide service delivery, it's practical to assume that our method could be replicated in most any type of setting, either urban or rural. The model is designed to provide effective transitional services while at the same time maintaining flexibility, so that it can be easily adapted to meet the resources of each locality.

The project design shown on page 2, illustrates the four (4) main components to be considered when replicating this particular model.

[It's also recognized that State Rehab Agencies may not always be the 'hand off' agency from the LEA's, however, it has been our experience that the State Rehabilitation Agency is usually the agency in the best position to help bridge the service delivery gap between schools and adult services.]

This model only suggest the major components to be considered and then it's basically up to the schools and Rehab Services and other community support agencies to identify the pieces of the assessment, training, and placement pieces which they feel are most readily available and appropriate for their local service area.

The replication/operations handbook (see enclosure) details other times when the assessment, training and placement process could begin in addition to that previously illustrated in figure 2. The handbook also describes the process for referral, case management assignment, schools and rehabilitation personnel duties and responsibility, etc. The final model, addressed in the handbook was adopted as the model which the four (4) original project participants (3 LEA's and 1 DRS office) felt best suited their local needs and the one they felt most comfortable continuing with local sponsorship.

The maintenance component involves the need to define follow-up services, how students may be 'recycled' if necessary; short term and long term follow along services and the methods of evaluating the effectiveness of transitional services of being offered.

Barriers to Replication

With the implementation of most new projects there is challenge, especially when two or more agencies elect to work jointly towards a common goal. We have been able to identify several obstacles which localities may encounter, but we feel that with desire and creativity, most of these barriers will become opportunities and can be circumvented or resolved.

2. Cooperation

(State Rehab Agency & LEA Relationship)
There must be a cooperative relationship established and a mutual agreement for both of these primary service providers, relating to the need for transitional services.

3. Definition of Agency Roles & Function

Roles and functions of all involved parties should be clearly defined (i.e. referral age and process, who pays for what, follow-up responsibilities, etc.)

3. Staffing Functions

While it's possible to replicate this model, in a modified sense, with just a school liaison person and a state agency Rehab counselor, it was found in our project that a school staff position/s with the exclusive responsibility for transitional services, was definitely beneficial. Even in areas where there already exist a good working relationship between the school counselor and a state Rehab counselor, the quantity and quality of services offered usually can not match those offered with additional personnel. This is especially true of case management responsibilities which often overwhelm state agency and school personnel both who are accustom to handling large caseloads of clients/students.

4. Resources

Lack of available resources can certainly present problems and restrict the various assessment, training, and placement options made available. In those areas where resources are limited, a look at perhaps some non-traditional methods of evaluation and training etc. can prove very helpful and certainly fit into the your design.

5. Support

It's felt that support is needed not just from the teachers, guidance and rehabilitation professionals, but from parents and employers as well. Development of this supportive network takes considerable effort and time but can present a barrier for implementation if not addressed.

6. Transportation

A barrier list would not be complete unless you include transportation, particularly in the more rural areas. Consideration needs to be given to identifying and creating as many transportation resources as possible. These resources should not only address how a student will access possible community services while in school, but how they will access adult service programs and employment, once school has finished.

7. Disincentives

Recognition of the primary disincentives (i.e. S.S.I. benefits) facing many severely disabled school youth as well as developing a good understanding of how these disincentives may effect each student is important as transitional plans are formulated. Recent changes in the Social Security laws have helped human service professionals better address the issue, but nevertheless, the loss of benefits is still a barrier which can not be overlooked.

8. Job Market

Fortunately, throughout the course of this project the unemployment rate for the localities involved in the project was relatively low. However, the potential lack of available jobs is a barrier which must be included and one to consider when implenenting this model, since one of the major expected outcomes of this transitional model is employment.

Recommendations for Replications:

1. Cooperative Community Relationships:

It's felt that a multi-agency cooperative agreement or letter of understanding should be developed to ensure committment to the transitional progran (i.e. committment/endorsement of the need for transitional services as well as committment of resources and staff to deliver the needed services). This could be done on a state level (i.e. Virginia's V.A.S.T. Project as mentioned on page 47), or at a local level. Lead agencies would, of course, include the L.E.A. (or perhaps several L.E.A.'s forming a regional concept) and the state rehabilitiation agency and perhaps the local mental health and mental retardation agencies. Also development of a Job Training Partnership Act (J.T.P.A.) grant might also be considered.

Further development of this cooperative relationship should also address other support agencies such as the state's employment services division, local community college system, Department of Visually Handicapped, etc. Once a committment is made and an agreement reached, then resources and staff can be identified, roles and functions delinated, and a joint budget prepared, etc.

2. Position Allocation/Reallocation

This project is designed to be adaptable for most L.E.A.'s and state Rehabilitation programs cooperative relationships, without the need of additional staff. However, it's our position that better transitional services, overall, can be offered by staff who have specific transitional duties. School divisions and state Rehabilitation agencies should review their present staffing patterns to see if full or part-time positions could be reassigned. Also, the utilization of other grants and programs such as the Job Training and Partnership Act might be available resources to explore in building a viable inter-agency transitional team.

3. Advisory Groups

This particular project began with a professional advisory group and a separate parent/employer advisory group. Our recommendation would be to combine the two groups into one advisory group or perhaps to ask the L.E.A.'s special education advisory group to take on advisory functions for your transitional service programs.

We feel it's certainly helpful to have an advisory group available, which probably need only meet quarterly (more frequently of course, as a new program gets started.)

In addition, it's imperative that a local transitional team be developed for each student, composed of a school representative/s, a rehabilitation representative, student/ parent, and any support agency representative which may be asked to become involved with the student. This team approach is vital throughout the I.E.P. process, once formal transitional plans have been developed.

4. In-Service Training

Develop appropriate in-service training geared particularly to schools (school board, administrators, and teachers), and Rehabilitation personnel, parents and students so that all concerned parties will have a better understanding of the transitional process, as well as their roles, rights, and responsibilities.

Valley Transitional School Project staff found it very beneficial to target various community resources and agency programs which could help broaden the classroom teachers perspective concerning available services (i.e. Social Service and Social Security eligibility, community sheltered workshop, transitional housing options, transportation network, program disincentives, etc.)

5. Community Public Relations

Create a greater community awareness of the needs of students with disabilities and gather community support by developing and implementing a sound public relations plan to reach the community, particularly local employers.

6. Resource Utilization

Use what resources you have in order to begin transitional services, rather than using 'what you don't have', as an excuse for not implementing transitional school services. In a multi-agency approach, localities can pool resources, become very creative and have a much better chance of bridging the gap between school and adult services.

VI. Products Developed

Product development has already been covered in a general sense in section four under Dissemination Activities. A summary of these products and their intented use is as follows:

1. Video A Sense of Pride
   (In-Service, Public Relations, Community Organizations, Conference Display)
2. Operational Handbook
   (Handbook for dissemination purposes; Operations handbook for teachers and Rehabilitation Counselors involved in cooperative transitional services, etc.)
3. Parent/Employer Pamphlet
   (2 Separate Pamphlets)
   (Specifically geared to parents and employers addressing many common misperceptions, etc.)
4. Newsletters
   (Published quarterly by transitional staff to update teachers, Rehab, parents and students of activities and successes etc. of students involved in transitional services.)
5. Fact Sheet
   (Conferences, mail-outs, general purpose handout for news media, etc.)
6. Slide Program
   (General public relations, in-service training needs).
7. Triptych Display
   (Conferences, in-service, mall displays, etc.

*Copies of video, handbook, pamphlets, newsletters and fact sheet are attached as a appendixes/enclosures.

VII. Conclusions and Recommendations

A. Impact Summary

Project staff, as well as those significant others associated with the project, feel the project had a significant impact not only on the general service delivery of transitional services to students with disabilities, but also had an impact on the agencies such as LEA's and DRS, MH & MR Services and the community as well. Specific areas of impact are as follows:

- Increased/Improved communications among all agencies involved, but particularly LEA's and State Rehabilitation Agency personnel.
- Began to help identify and plug the gaps in the general service delivery system both from school to Rehabilitation services and from schools/Rehabilitation services to other adult services (attributed mostly to the increased availability of case management services to project staff.)
- Created an awareness of the need for transitional services with parent/students, school and rehabilitation personnel and other adult service providers.
- Addressed and dispelled many myths which employers parents (and to a certain extent school and rehab personnel) had regarding the in/abilities of students with disabilities.
- The level of cooperation increased between the three (3) LEA's involved with the project and the local state Rehabilitation agency office and most major adult service providers. One joint effort resulted in a revised community based curriculum for the TMR and EMR students served by the three LEA's.
- The general service delivery system became a more integrated (holistic) team effort than existed prior to the grant.
- The project gave impetus to the formation and development of an interagency (vocationally oriented) cooperating group, which is presently still operating and has help to overcome some of the agency 'turf' issues prevalent, prior to the grant.
- Project has helped identify and deliver many more options for students, as offered by the school and rehabilitation.
- Increased awareness and participation by the academic teachers. Prior to the project the LEA's Special Education teachers were usually not involved in the school to rehabilitation process. Often they failed to connect their role with the various vocational options and outcomes of their students. Teachers are a vital link in the transitional school process and their role and contribution is much needed.
- Various in-service workshops have now helped the classroom teachers to become more aware of available community resources and they can now serve as a closer link between parents and available adult adult services.

Impact on Students

- Based on feedback from students, parents, teachers and adult providers, the impact which this project had on many students was in the areas of increased self-confidence, self-esteem. They also achieved a greater level of independence; took advantage of the variety of services made available and probably were able to stay in school longer since they were able to participate in more relevant program/s.
- More students were employed in competitive situations rather than sheltered employment. The local DRS office participating in the grant shows a comparison of overall successful closures from a year prior to the grant through the three (3) years included in the grant.

Year	Successful Closures In Sheltered	Successful Closures In Competitive
1986-87	8%	80%
1985-86	16%	68%
1984-85	18%	72%
1983-84	16%	60%

Note: Percentage does not include those successfully closed as homemakers, unpaid family workers, etc. Also, for the 1st (7) months of 1987-88 Fiscal year the competitive rate is still at 80%

- The attitude of many parents changed, whereby they were able to observe what other students with disabilities were achieving and could begin to better deal with the issue of overprotection and function in a more supportive and encouraging role.

Major and Minor Breakthroughs

- Video and pamphlets entitled "A Sense of Pride" were very well received and proved extremely beneficial with public relations and in-service activities.
- The networking of the local transitional team with other community interagency groups proved very valuable.
- The placement of several students in the trainable mentally retarded (TMR's) class into competitive employment was significant.
- The development of a cooperative inter-agency school program to replace the grant is quite exciting and a tribute to the efforts of all involved.

- o Development of a long term (5 year) follow-along plan, whereby new transitional school staff can identify the continued needs of students completing services and make appropriate referrals for services.
- o Summer Youth Employment Services provided excellent assessment, training and work experiences for both the EMR and TMR students. This was brought about to a large extent by the increased case management activities offered by project staff.
- o A greater acceptance by employers and parents of the abilities and employability of students with disabilities.

Improvements in Project Design:

There were only a few changes which occurred from the beginning of the project to its completion. Basically the design of the project remained unchanged throughout the three (3) years. However, there are several recommendations which need mentioning:

1. Development of a more formal cooperative agreement among participating agencies, particularly those who will have representatives serving on the individualized transitional teams (Virginia through Project V.A.S.T. is in the process of piloting the local interagency transitional team concept - L.I.T.T.)

2. Our project initially called for a project director and one assessment specialist and two job coaches, and while it was convenient to have four staff initially, it soon became apparent that four was too many. For our project size, three would have been more appropriate.

3. The design did not have a formal evaluation component and we feel this certainly would have strengthened the design. Dealing with some specific research implication would also have been helpful.

4. The design needs to include methods of more objectively measuring outcomes, (i.e. the extent to which the project did or did not have a significant measurable impact on the students involvement.)

5. The Project design was not very effective in blending our Rehabilitation Counselor position (assigned on a part-time basis) into the project design. A more workable plan would have been to allow the caseload counselor to work exclusively with the project and not just on a temporary/part-time basis.

Research Implications

There are several implications resulting from this project. One is just how are we (providers, researchers, etc.) to define "success". Are we to use competitive employment, for a certain period of time, as the only criterion? Do we develop a method to ascertain an individuals level of independence achieved after public school? It seems as more and more grants are awarded it will be imperative to have some common definitions, to better attempt to measure the effectiveness of our transitional school programs.

Secondly, it seems that various research studies suggest the importance that real work experience can have on the positive outcome of students with disabilities, further study seems to be indicated in this area. Our grant experienced the use of a one-half day academic and one-half day vocationally oriented school program. It would be interesting to study the difference between those students exposed to a more traditional academic/ vocational oriented classroom experience vs youth who participated in full or part-time 'real' jobs during the summers and perhaps the majority of their final school year.

Another significant implication deals with the special education curriculum, (at the elementary and senior high levels), on the need to further develop independent living skills, and to address the issues of appropriate attitudes, values, responsibilities and work ethics.

Our project results point to the fact that students who were determined to have the most successful job placements were those with a 'good attitude'. A recent study (Heal, Haney, Destefane and Rusch, February, 1988 - dealing with successful and unsuccessful placements of secondary students with mental handicaps) supports our findings that attitude is as important, if not more important, than a students ability as a positive indicator of job success. Further research is indicated and should look at: the effects that a 'refocused special education curriculum' would have on drop out rates, the employer/co-worker acceptability issue, the students ability to function more independently-both from a personal as well as a vocational/career standpoint, and the teaching/ transitional strategies which lead not only to successful employment, but to a more total intergation of handicapped youth into all aspects of community life.

A SENSE OF PRIDE

GUIDE FOR PARENTS

DISABLED WORKERS ARE ACCEPTED BY OTHER EMPLOYEES.

Most employees with disabilities are accepted when co-workers begin to see them as persons, not as disabilities. People fear what they do not know; as they come to know and understand new persons or situations, they learn to be more accepting.

PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES HAVE ABILITIES.

Often parents have been repeatedly told what their child can not do. All persons regardless of their disability have strengths, as well as, weaknesses. Parents need to focus on their child's strengths and help them develop to their fullest potential.

SOCIAL SECURITY BENEFITS MAY BE EFFECTED WHEN THE PERSON WITH DISABILITIES BECOMES SUCCESSFULLY EMPLOYED.

Social Security has guidelines which look at individual cases. Recipients may be allowed a trial work period which ends after 9 months (not necessarily consecutive) of work for over $75 a month (or over 15 hours a month if self-employed); the trial work period gives a recipient the opportunity to test sustained work ability. A determination of the ability to perform substantial gainful activity is not made until after the trial work period is completed.

**For more information, contact your local Social Security Office.

PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES CAN BE PRODUCTIVE WORKERS.

Several studies show that workers with disabilites – properly and selectively placed – are as productive as non-disabled workers. This is true regardless of the person's disability.

LOCAL AGENCIES ARE AVAILABLE TO HELP YOUR CHILD SECURE EMPLOYMENT.

Depending on your child's disability, several different agencies may be involved to provide services to your child. As a general rule, the Department of Rehabilitative Services is a good place to start since they work with a variety of disabilities. They can also refer you and your child to other available resources.

SUPPORT SERVICES MAY BE PROVIDED TO THE DISABLED WORKER.

If your child meets the eligibility criteria for the Department of Rehabilitative Services, a variety of support services can be offered. These include developing job seeking skills, and providing job coaching, on-the-job training, work experience and supported employment.

Tax credits and other employment incentives can also be offered to employers who hire workers with disabilities.

RELIABLE TRANSPORTATION SHOULD BE ARRANGED TO ENABLE THE DISABLED WORKER TO GET TO AND FROM WORK.

Perhaps the person can drive themselves. Parents or guardians should support and encourage their child to obtain a driver's license. If the individual is unable to drive, then other sources need to be explored, i.e., public transportation, car pooling or a job which is within walking distance.

Part of the information was compiled from "Facts About Workers With Disabilities", Governor's Overall Advisory Council on Needs of Handicapped Persons (May 1988) and "A Summary Guide to Social Security and Supplemental Security Income Work Incentives for the Disabled and Blind", SSA Pub. No. 64-030 (September 1988).

TIPS FOR PARENTS

1. If your child is still in school, check to see what type of transitional planning from school to work is being provided.

2. Obtain a Social Security number for your child.

3. Remember that children with disabilities are entitled to a free public education. However, when they finish school, adult services are often based on eligibility criteria. This means that your child may or may not receive a certain service.

4. Also remember that often adult services have waiting lists. These services should be explored before your child finishes their school program. You may want to discuss adult service options with your child's teacher or the Special Education Supervisor in your school division.

5. Support groups may be available for both you and your child. For example, the Association of Retarded Citizens (ARC) provides activities for mentally retarded individuals and provides a supportive network for the individual's parents.

6. When referring to your child's disability, use terms which are not demeaning. For example:

USE	DON'T USE
Down Syndrome	mongoloid
Mentally Retarded	"retard" or dumb
Deaf or Hearing Impaired	"deaf and dumb" or "deaf and mute"
Persons with Disabilities	crippled or deformed

For More Information Contact:

Department of Rehabilitative Services
1112 MacTanley Place
Staunton, VA 24401

703/332-7715

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A SENSE OF PRIDE

GUIDE FOR EMPLOYERS

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DISABLED WORKERS ARE AS PRODUCTIVE AS NON-DISABLED WORKERS.

Several studies show that workers with disabilities – properly and selectively placed – are very productive employees.

DISABLED WORKERS ARE SAFE.

In a study of 100 large corporations, 57% reported lower accident rates for employees with disabilities, 41% reported accident rates which were the same as those of able-bodied employees and only 2% reported higher accident rates.

COMPANY INSURANCE RATES WILL NOT SKYROCKET IF DISABLED EMPLOYEES ARE HIRED.

A survey of 279 companies conducted by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and the National Association of Manufacturers indicated that 80% of those companies reported no effect on insurance costs.

Regarding Worker's Compensation: "Second injury" laws are in effect in all 50 states. These laws protect the employer, limiting liability only to injuries suffered on the job. Actually, claims to the Second Injury Fund are seldom made – a tribute to the safety consciousness of employees with disabilities.

Regarding health insurance: Extending policies to include disabled workers probably will have little, if any, impact on the cost of providing benefits. U.S. Bureau of Labor statistics indicate employees with disabilities do not use more illness and accident benefits than other employees.

IT DOES NOT COST A LOT OF MONEY TO MAKE ADJUSTMENTS IN THE WORKPLACE.

When modifications are necessary, 51% cost nothing and 30% cost between $1.00 and $500.00, but most workers with disabilities require no special work arrangements.

COMPANIES CAN GET TAX CREDIT FOR EMPLOYING DISABLED WORKERS.

A Federal program allows most employers to receive Targeted Job Tax Credits when they employ workers with disabilities. A company can receive a credit of up to 40% of the first $6,000 ($2,400) in wages paid to the targeted employee during the first year.

ABSENTEEISM IS NOT GREATER AMONG DISABLED WORKERS.

In a study of 100 corporations mentioned before, 55% of the corporations reported lower absenteeism for workers with disabilities; 40% found no difference; and only 5% found higher absenteeism.

DISABLED WORKERS DO NOT HAVE A HIGHER TURNOVER RATE.

In the study of 100 corporations, 83% reported lower turnover rates for workers with disabilities; 16% reported the same turnover rates; and only 1% reported a higher turnover rate.

DISABLED WORKERS ARE ACCEPTED BY OTHER EMPLOYEES.

Most employees with disabilities are accepted when co-workers begin to see them as persons, not as disabilities. People fear what they do not know; as they come to know and understand new persons or situations, they learn to be more accepting.

DISABLED WORKERS DO NOT NEED PREFERENTIAL TREATMENT.

Most want an equal chance to be hired, work hard, receive training and be promoted, based on their abilities.

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Information was compiled from "Facts About Workers With Disabilities", Governor's Overall Advisory Council on Needs of Handicapped Persons (May 1985).

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Able-bodied: is the term for describing persons without disabilities. The word "normal" is often used to refer to statistical norms and averages.

Disability, Disabled, Physical Disability: these terms are preferred over "handicap(ped)" to describe a permanent, physical condition that interferes with a person's ability to do something independently – walk, see, hear, talk, dress, learn, lift, work, etc. Terms such as cripple(d), deformed, victim suffer, invalid, and spastic are considered negative and demeaning and should not be used.

Down Syndrome: is preferred over "mongolism(iod)" to describe a form of mental retardation involving improper chromosomal division at conception.

Mentally Retarded: is the preferred term for describing a person, who from birth has developed at a rate significantly below average. Terms such as mentally deficient, imbecile, and feeble-minded are considered derogatory.

Deaf: is correctly used to describe a person with a total hearing loss. It is not appropriate for describing a person with partial hearing. Such persons are more accurately described as having a (partial or severe) hearing loss or hearing impairment.

Seizure: is correctly used to describe an involuntary muscular contraction symptomatic of the brain disorder, epilepsy. The term "convulsion" should be reserved for the more dramatic type of seizure involing contractions of the entire body. Although the term "fit" is used, it connotes mental derangement or loss of emotional control.

Specific Learning Disability: is a disorder in the ability to learn effectively in respect to one's own potential when presented with an appropriate, regular instructional environment. This does not include persons with mental retardation, emotional disturbance, or those with a vision or hearing loss.

For More Information Contact:

Virginia Department of Rehabilitative Services
112 MacTanley Place
Staunton, VA 24401

703/332-7700

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